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**ABSTRACT**

The state of Kentucky recognized a need to standardize automotive mechanics training throughout the state and to establish minimum guidelines for the quality of instruction in such programs. To meet these needs, the Office of Vocational Education selected the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) and began the certification process for local school programs. A project director was selected and the certification program was conducted; at the project deadline of June 30, 1987, 36 of the 83 schools targeted for certification received certification in all or some specialty areas; 20 schools are approved and awaiting a team visit; 5 schools have completed the team visit and are awaiting the results; and 6 schools have submitted one or both applications. Kentucky's efforts revealed a number of obstacles to certification, such as (1) lack of understanding of the evaluation process on the part of local personnel; (2) lack of certified team leaders; (3) time limitations; (4) equipment limitations; (5) change in project directors; and (6) budget limitations. As a result of the project, Kentucky leads the nation in the ASE certification process in both the number of programs certified and the percentage of programs certified. (This report contains a list of steps needed for ASE certification and a table showing the certification status, as of June 30, 1987, of each of the targeted schools. (KC)

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# KENTUCKY'S AUTOMOTIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

June 30, 1987

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Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe the certification efforts of Kentucky's Automotive Mechanics training programs and to report the findings and recommendations. This document will also serve as a summary and closing report for the auto certification program at the state level.

Since the certification plan has national implications, it is hoped that this information can aid other states seeking similar certification. Also, it may benefit NATEF in updating and revising the certification process in the future.

## OVERVIEW OF KENTUCKY'S CERTIFICATION EFFORTS

Kentucky recognized there was a need to standardize automotive mechanics training throughout the state and to establish minimum guidelines for the quality of instruction in such programs. The Office of Vocational Education searched for a national agency with a certification plan developed and in place. The Office selected the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

At the beginning of this research and development project in 1982, improvement in teaching, curriculum and quality of equipment was expected to result from certification. Program prestige and credibility were expected to improve also. Therefore, 100 percent of Kentucky's secondary and postsecondary auto mechanics preparatory programs were targeted for certification, with 25 percent to complete the process each year for four years.

The certifying agency for ASE is the National Automotive Technical Education Foundation (NATEF). NATEF was to examine the automotive training programs and evaluate them according to nationally accepted standards of quality, recommending certification or identifying those areas needing improvement. The areas to be examined included program standards, tools, equipment, curriculum, goals, and tasks.

A state coordinator or project director was needed, and Mr. Bruce Shaeffer was originally designated to serve in that capacity. The project director was to serve as the state's contact person with NATEF at the national level and become familiar with the certification standards and procedures. The director would also be responsible for obtaining training and certification for a number of evaluation team leaders (ETLs). During the 1986-87 school year, Mr. Shaeffer was promoted, and a change in project directors occurred. The new director is:

Thomas G. Harris, Industrial Education Consultant
2116 Capital Plaza Tower
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-2326

While Kentucky did not reach its goal of 100 percent certification prior to the project deadline of June 30, 1987, the results are rather impressive. From a total of 83 schools targeted for certification, several having more than one auto mechanics program, the following accomplishments resulted:

- Thirty-six schools received certification in all or some specialty areas.
- Twenty schools are approved and are awaiting a team visit.
- Five schools have completed the team visit and are awaiting the results.
- Six schools have submitted one or both applications.

The most recent report from NATEF showed Kentucky to be leading the ASE certification process in both the number of programs certified and the percentage of programs certified. Attached as Addendum I is the June 30, 1987, status report on individual Kentucky schools.

While June 30, 1987, marks the end of the ASE certification project at the state level, it does not mean the end of the certification effort. Considerable momentum has been developed, and schools are expected to continue to strive for certification on their own. The Office of Vocational Education will, of course, continue to provide assistance and guidance. Programs that have achieved ASE certification will be expected to maintain that status through recertification every five years. Assistance is available for those schools phoning or writing the project director, Thomas Harris.

## STEPS TO ASE CERTIFICATION THROUGH NATEF

Any state seeking ASE certification should follow these steps:

At the state level:

1) Budget for each state-operated school's certification fees, literature requirements, and ETLs' expenses.
2) Hold regional workshops or inservice to communicate goals and objectives to the auto teachers and school.
3) Create a pool of trained and certified evaluation team leaders for later use. That may be arranged by calling or writing:

   Dr. Byrl Shoemaker
   Educational Consultant, NATEF
   92 Ceramic Drive
   Columbus, OH 43214
   (614) 263-2139

At the local level:

4) Seek certification by requesting self-evaluation materials from:

   Ms. Nancy Hall, Director
   National Automotive Technicians
   Education Foundation
   1920 Association Drive
   Reston, VA 22091-1502
   (703) 648-3838

   (a) Complete the self-evaluation instrument according to instructions.

   (b) Forward the completed initial application form and self-evaluation rating sheet to NATEF.

5) Review NATEF's response to the application form and self-evaluation sheet. In the event a program does not meet the standards for an on-site visit, NATEF will identify problem areas, recommend needed modifications, and communicate those to the respective schools. A positive response enables a school to complete step six.

6) Request, complete, and return an on-site team evaluation application.

The state will identify the evaluation team leader (ETL) assigned to conduct the visit. The date of the visit will be determined by the ETL, team members, and the automotive teacher. The team will verify information contained in the self-study rating sheet. Findings are sent to NATEF by the ETL. NATEF will notify the school of the results. More detailed information is available in the ASE brochure.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kentucky's certification effort has revealed a number of obstacles to certification. The following is a list of the major stumbling blocks, in the order of magnitude, and recommendations for correction.

### Communication

1) The key personnel at the local level did not fully comprehend the evaluation process nor understand exactly what was expected of them. They did not understand how to complete the self-evaluation instrument. For example, Standard 7.8B asks "Is each student encouraged to purchase a hand tool set (during the period of instruction) which is appropriate to the automotive specialty area(s) in which he/she is being taught?" The typical response to this question was to circle the lowest number, indicating a "no."

   Through a misunderstanding this question was mismarked, resulting in erroneous information. Actual classroom practices contradict what was circled. When asked in person, each teacher stated he encouraged students to purchase top-quality tools. In addition, the teachers informed their students that companies offer substantial tool discounts to students. Also, students were told many employers required automotive mechanics to purchase their own basic hand tools.

   It is recommended that intensive inservice training be held at the regional or small-group level to train the automotive teacher and school administrator in the certification process, with emphasis upon the self-evaluation document. The single most important recommendation to any state seeking ASE certification is this: Make the auto teacher and the school administrator a team, mutually responsible for the process, and train them in the application and self-evaluation procedures!

### Lack of Certified Team Leaders

2) The second largest handicap Kentucky experienced, especially in the final year, was a critical shortage of trained and certified evaluation team leaders (ETLs). Kentucky reached a low point of one ETL in January 1987, just as many schools began to seek certification before the June 30 deadline. An additional six ETLs were trained in February, but they were too few and too late to avoid a backlog

of schools requesting last-minute team visits. Most, if not all, of the 20 schools now awaiting team visits could have received their visits prior to our self-imposed deadline if ETLs had been available.

It is recommended that a rather large pool of ETLs be trained. Consider this recruitment process: (1) select ETLs that do not have classroom responsibilities; and (2) provide substitutes for ETLs that teach classes.

Time Limitations

3) Perhaps the time table of one year for a school to reach certification was too restrictive. One to three years might be more realistic, depending upon the amount of modifications or upgrading an individual program requires. Time limitations should, of course, be set for each stage of the process.

Equipment Limitations

4) The lack of equipment was a factor in a small number of programs experiencing difficulty reaching certification.

For example, if a program has no front end alignment machine, or if the equipment is obsolete, the program cannot be certified in that particular specialty area. However, that does not necessarily affect the other specialty areas.

State Personnel Shift

5) A change in project directors occurred in 1986, possibly creating some delay.

Budget Limitations

6) The rather large number of schools attempting to reach certification just prior to the project deadline created a shortfall of travel money for ETLs. This proved to be more of an inconvenience than an obstacle and did not prevent or delay any team visits. This last-minute rush should be anticipated and prepared for.

## SUMMARY

The ASE certification is highly valued and respected, and it carries a connotation of quality. Instructors are quick to point out the ASE plaques on their classroom walls, for each plaque is an unbiased statement that addresses the overall program standards.

According to Mr. Paul Constant, automotive teacher and department chairperson for the Elizabethtown State Vocational Technical School:

> People in the community can relate to the ASE certification. Equipment donations have increased, and credibility has been added to our program as a result of the certification. We have a viable program, and the opportunity exists to provide high-caliber technicians who are much needed by the auto industry.

There is a welcome standardization occurring within the automotive training programs in Kentucky.

ADDENDUM #I

SOURCE:
Kentucky Vocational Education Records

## KENTUCKY AUTOMOTIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

| REGION | SCHOOL | STATUS AS OF 6/30/87 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Marshall County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Fulton County AVEC | Certified in 4 areas |
| | Ballard County AVEC | Withdrew application |
| | West Kentucky SVTS | Certified in 7 areas |
| | Paudcah AVEC | Certified in 2 areas |
| | Murray AVEC | Certified in 4 areas |
| | Mayfield AVEC | Make modifications and reapply |
| 2 | Webster County AVEC | Made modifications and reapplied |
| | Muhlenberg County AVEC | Received initial application |
| | Christian County AVEC | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Caldwell County AVEC | Make modifications and reapply |
| | Madisonville SVTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| 3 | Union County AVEC | Certified in 3 areas |
| | Ohio County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Henderson County AVEC | Certified in 3 areas |
| | Daviess County SVTS | Certified in 7 areas |
| 4 | Barren County AVEC | Team visit completed |
| | Allen County AVEC | Approved for team visit (Oct) |
| | Bowling Green SVTS | Team visit completed |
| | Russellville AVEC | Initial application received |
| | Monroe County AVEC | Make modifications and reapply |
| 5 | Nelson County AVEC | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Meade County AVEC | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Marion County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Grayson County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Breckinridge County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Elizabethtown SVTS | Certified in 6 areas |

| REGION | SCHOOL | STATUS AS OF 6/30/87 |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Jefferson SVTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Scott Detrick AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Shelby County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Oldham County AVEC | Received initial application |
| | Bullitt County AVEC | Initial application sent to NATEF |
| | Pleasure Ridge Park AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Jeffersontown AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Fairdale AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | LaGrange AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| 7 | Boone County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Northern Kentucky SVTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | James D. Patton AVEC | Received initial application |
| | Chapman AVD | Initial application not received |
| | Carroll County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Campbell County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas; approved for team visit for 3 more |
| | Northern Cambell County VTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| 9 | Maysville AVEC | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Rowan SVTS | Approved for team visit |
| | Morgan County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Montgomery County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Lewis County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| 10 | Russell AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Greenup County AVEC | Make modifications and reapply |
| | Carter County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Boyd County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Ashland SVTS | Approved for team visit |
| 11 | Mayo SVTS | Team visit completed |
| | Millard AVEC (Pike Co.) | Approved for team visit |
| | Belfry AVEC (Pike Co.) | Initial application not received |

| REGION | SCHOOL | STATUS AS OF 6/30/87 |
|---|---|---|
| | Phelps AVEC (Pike Co.) | Withdrew application (experimental program) |
| | Martin County AVEC | Team visit scheduled |
| | Garth AVEC (Floyd Co.) | Initial application not received |
| 12 | Lee County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Knott County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| | Hazard SVTS | Team visit application received |
| | Breathitt County AVEC | Initial application not received |
| 13 | Rockcastle County AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Corbin AVEC | Approved for team visit |
| | Clay County AVEC | NATEF has requested additional information on initial application |
| | Laurel County SVTS | Team visit completed |
| | Bell County AVEC | Team visit completed |
| | Harlan SVTS | Team visit application received |
| 14 | Somerset SVTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Wayne County AVEC | Certified in 6 areas |
| | Russell County AVEC | Certified in 7 areas |
| | Green County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Clinton County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Casey County AVEC | Certified in 7 areas |
| 15 | Harrison County AVEC | Certified in 4 areas |
| | Garrard County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Franklin County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Clark County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |
| | Southside AVEC | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Northside AVEC | Certified in 4 areas |
| | Central Kentucky SVTS | Certified in all 8 areas |
| | Harrodsburg AVEC | Certified in 7 areas |
| | Madison County AVEC | Certified in 5 areas |